

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY MASERU IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

UNCLAS STATE 078515

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, LT, UK

SUBJECT: REMARKS OF UK FOREIGN SECRETARY, DR. OWEN

REF: MASERU 449 (NOTAL)

1. QUOTE THE FOLLOWING ARE MAJOR EXTRACTS FROM A TELE-
VISION INTERVIEW ON "WEEKEND WORLD" GIVEN BY THE FOREIGN
SECRETARY, DR. DAVID OWEN, ON SUNDAY, THIRD APRIL 1977.

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QUESTION: AND WHAT ARE THE CHANCES THAT DR. OWEN CAN
SUCCEED WHERE ALL BUT DR. KISSINGER HAVE FAILED? I BEGAN
BY ASKING HIM WHY HE THOUGHT IT WAS WORTH GOING TO
SOUTHERN AFRICA AT ALL AT A TIME WHEN THERE HAS BEEN SO
LITTLE PROGRESS OVER THE RHODESIAN PROBLEM.

SECRETARY OF STATE: ITS THE LACK OF SUFFICIENT PROGRESS
THAT SATISFIED ME WHY I SHOULD GO. I THINK IF I WAS A
BETTING MAN THE CHANCES OF SUCCESS ARE VERY SLIGHT. YOU

COULD SAY THEREFORE STAY AT HOME AND DON'T PUT YOURSELF AT RISK IN AFRICA NOW. RHODESIA - THE PROBLEM COULD EASILY BE SOLVED BY RECOURSE TO THE GUN. THERE IS ALREADY DANGEROUS GUERRILLA ACTIVITY GOING ON ALL THE TIME. A LOT OF AFRICAN SOLUTIONS HAVE BEEN RESOLVED BY A GUN BUT THERE ARE MEN OF GOODWILL WHO WANT A PEACEFUL SOLUTION OF

RHODESIA, BOTH BLACK AND WHITE RHODESIANS, AND WHILE THERE IS A POSSIBILITY HOWEVER SLIGHT OF GETTING A PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO A MAJORITY RULE INSIDE RHODESIA IN 1978 I THINK A BRITISH FOREIGN SECRETARY SHOULD DO EVERYTHING IN HIS POWER TO TRY AND BRING THAT ABOUT AND I DON'T THINK YOU SHOULD MAKE A CALCULATION OF WHETHER I AM GOING TO BE SUCCESSFUL OR NOT. THE ODDS AGAINST ME BEING SUCCESSFUL ARE PRETTY SMALL. I AM A REALIST.

2. QUESTION: DO YOU STILL BELIEVE IT IS POSSIBLE TO GET A PEACEFUL TRANSITION?

SECRETARY OF STATE: TO THE LAST MOMENT THAT I THINK IT IS POSSIBLE THEN I THINK I SHOULD BEND EVERY EFFORT TO DO SO.

3. QUESTION: DO YOU SHARE MY IMPRESSION THAT MR. SMITH RECENTLY HAS BEEN GETTING, IF ANYTHING, EVEN MORE INTRANSIGENT THAN USUAL AND ARE YOU BOTHERED BY THE FACT
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THAT THE PATH TO SALISBURY SEEMS TO BE A GRAVEYARD OF DIPLOMATIC REPUTATIONS WITH THE POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF DR. KISSINGER?

SECRETARY OF STATE: WELL I THINK YOU COULD ARGUE THAT DR. KISSINGER RUES PERHAPS SOME ASPECTS OF HIS INVOLVEMENT IN THIS ALTHOUGH HE DID ACHIEVE AN IMPORTANT BREAKTHROUGH WITH SMITH SAYING THAT HE WOULD HAVE MAJORITY RULE WITHIN TWO YEARS BUT HE HAS NOW QUALIFIED THAT TO ONLY BEING WHEN HE HAD AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT OF WHICH HE HAD TO BE A MEMBER AND THEREFORE COULD BLOCK INDEFINITELY. ...YES, BUT I DON'T THINK A POLITICIAN HAS ALWAYS GOT TO MAKE A CALCULATION OF WHAT'S IN HIS ADVANTAGE. A LOT OF MY FRIENDS HAVE SAID DON'T TOUCH AFRICA, STEER CLEAR OF IT, DON'T GO NEAR IT. I THINK IF I ASKED FOR A SLIGHTLY MORE CONFIDENT BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY AND A BIT MORE BOLDNESS THEN I HAVE GOT TO BE A BIT BOLDER MYSELF AND BE PREPARED TO RISK FAILURE. AND I AM PREPARED TO RISK A FAILURE. I DON'T THINK THAT WE SHOULD THINK THAT THE ONLY PERSON WHO CAN DELIVER A SOLUTION INTO RHODESIA IS MR SMITH. HE'S OPEN TO ANY ARRANGEMENT THAT'S MADE FOR A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT. HE'S ONE ASPECT OF WHITE RHODESIAN OPINION, HE'S NOT THE SOLE ASPECT OF WHITE RHODESIAN

OPINION AND THERE'S A VERY SIGNIFICANT BLACK MAJORITY THAT NEEDS TO BE CONSIDERED. BUT BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY IN AFRICA I THINK HAS GOT TO BE SET AGAINST A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE. FIRSTLY WE CANNOT AGREE TO RACIALISM AND APARTHEID POLICIES. THIS IS REPUGNANT TO US. FURTHER-MORE BLACK AFRICA'S INFLUENCE IN THE WORLD IS GROWING.

WE TRADE NOW NOT JUST WITH SOUTH AFRICA, WE TRADE WITH BLACK AFRICA AS A WHOLE. NIGERIA IS A VERY IMPORTANT TRADING NATION FOR US. AND WHEN WE LOOK AT AFRICA WE CAN SEE THE INEVITABLENESS OF BLACK MAJORITY RULE AND IT IS SOMETHING FOR A BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY THAT IT DID REALISE THAT IN THE EARLY SIXTIES. IT MAY BE THAT WE
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HAVE NOT GIVEN SUFFICIENT WEIGHT TO THE HISTORICAL TRUISM THAT IT WILL BE BLACK MAJORITY RULE AND THAT WE HAVE BEEN PERHAPS TOO CAUTIOUS, TOO CONCILIATORY. AND I THINK MYSELF THAT OVER RHODESIA WE OUGHT AT TIME TO HAVE BEEN FIRMER.

4. QUESTION: IF THERE IS A MORAL DAMAGE TO OUR FOREIGN POLICY HOW FAR ARE WE GOING TO BE WILLING TO SACRIFICE OUR TRADING INTERESTS, OUR INVESTMENT INTERESTS TO COMMIT OUR RESOURCES OF MONEY EVEN OF MEN, IN THAT PART OF THE WORLD IN ORDER TO GET A SETTLEMENT THERE?

SECRETARY OF STATE: WELL LIKE ALL ASPECTS OF POLITICS IT INVOLVES COMPROMISE AND IT'S A BALANCE BETWEEN MORALITY, ECONOMIC NECESSITIES AND POLITICAL FACTS OF LIFE IF YOU LIKE. BUT I THINK THERE HAS BEEN A TENDENCY TO BE TOO AFRAID TO INTRODUCE A MORAL ELEMENT INTO FOREIGN POLICY AND THAT'S WHY I WELCOMED SO MUCH THE NEW CARTER ADMINISTRATION AND THE WHOLE ATTITUDE ON HUMAN RIGHTS, AND I THINK THAT IF A FOREIGN POLICY DOESN'T HAVE SOME ETHOS, SOME MORALITY, YOU DON'T CARRY PEOPLE WITH YOU IN YOUR OWN COUNTRY, BECAUSE THERE IS A MORALITY AND THERE IS A SORT OF ETHOS OF BEHAVIOUR IN ONE'S OWN COUNTRY AND I THINK IT SHOULD BE REFLECTED IN ONE'S RELATIONS WITH OTHERS. AND I HAVE ALWAYS FELT THIS. BUT OF COURSE YOU'RE BEING INCONSISTENT FROM TIME TO TIME. THERE ARE COUNTRIES WHERE THEIR HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS ARE PRETTY OBVIOUS AND WELL KNOWN AND YET FOR A VARIETY OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REASONS YOU MAY NOT BE QUITE SO PUBLIC AT LEAST ABOUT YOUR CONDEMNATION OF THEM. I SAID IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS THE OTHER DAY, THE PRICE OF CHAMPIONING HUMAN RIGHTS IS A LITTLE INCONSISTENCY. BUT YOU COULD ALSO SAY THE PRICE OF DEMOCRACY IS A LITTLE UNTIDINESS. WE DON'T LIVE IN A PERFECT WORLD, YOU HAVE TO CHOOSE I THINK THERE IS A NEED FOR GREATER MORALITY IN DOMESTIC POLITICS TOO.

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5. QUESTION: MAY NOT THE PRICE OF CHAMPIONING HUMAN RIGHTS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA AND PARTICULARLY SOUTH AFRICA WHERE THE LABOUR PARTY HAS ALWAYS REGARDED APARTHEID AS A MAJOR AFFRONT AGAINST HUMAN RIGHTS, BE A LITTLE MORE THAN INCONSISTENCY. MAY IT NOT BE A THREAT TO THE UK'S

VERY SUBSTANTIAL INVESTMENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA AND OUR TRADE WITH IT?

SECRETARY OF STATE: YES I THINK THERE IS GOING TO BE A REAL DILEMMA HERE. WE'VE GOT TO FACE IT THAT SOUTH AFRICA IS A COUNTRY WHERE WE HAVE HEAVY INVESTMENTS AND VERY CONSIDERABLE ECONOMIC INTERESTS. BUT I THINK YOU CAN BREAK THE PROBLEM DOWN. RHODESIA AND NAMIBIA ARE TWO COUNTRIES WHERE THERE IS A VERY STRONG CASE FOR BLACK MAJORITY RULE QUICKLY. IN MY VIEW IN BOTH COUNTRIES IT COULD COME IN 1978 FOR INSTANCE. NOW IN SOUTH AFRICA YOU FACE A DIFFERENT DIMENSION. YOU HAVE A VERY MUCH LARGER WHITE POPULATION, MUCH GREATER HISTORY AND A GREATER INVOLVEMENT, A HIGHLY SOPHISTICATED COUNTRY. IN SOME WAYS THERE YOU FACE A PROBLEM SIMILAR TO THE SOUTH IN AMERICA, WHERE YOU HAD A VERY CONSIDERABLE RACIAL PREJUDICE AND A GREAT MANY RACIAL PRACTICES WHICH WERE REALLY INTOLERABLE. NOW IT TOOK SOME DECADES BEFORE THE WHITE SOUTHERN OPINION IN AMERICA COULD COME TO GRIPS WITH THE NEED TO TREAT BLACK AMERICANS AS THEIR EQUALS AND TO GIVE THEM FULL CIVIL RIGHTS AND THAT STRUGGLE, FOR INSTANCE WAS STILL GOING ON IN THE 1960'S. NOW I THINK IN SOUTH AFRICA IT IS GOING TO TAKE A LONG TIME TO MAKE THOSE CHANGES AND WE IN THE WEST ARE GOING TO HAVE TO UNDERSTAND THIS AND WE ARE GOING TO HAVE TO TRY AND PERSUADE BLACK AFRICA TO UNDERSTAND THIS. THAT IF WE DRIVE THE WHITE SOUTH AFRICAN INTO A TOTAL LAAGER MENTALITY, WE COULD FORCE ONE OF THE MOST RIGHT WING AND MOST LOATHSOME REGIMES TO DEVELOP THAT THOSE PEOPLE WHO

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WANT TO MODERATE THEIR POLICIES ON APARTHEID WOULD THEMSELVES EITHER LEAVE THE COUNTRY OR BE ROOTED OUT. IT WOULD BECOME TOTALLY ISOLATED FROM WORLD OPINION, THERE WOULD BE TERRIBLE REPRESION OF BLACKS, EVEN GREATER THAN THERE IS AT THE MOMENT.

6. QUESTION: AREN'T ALL THESE THINGS YOU MENTION ALREADY TRUE OF SOUTH AFRICA?

SECRETARY OF STATE: WELL MANY OF THOSE THINGS ARE ALL TOO TRUE ALREADY AND THIS IS THE REAL PROBLEM. IT COULD GET WORSE. NOBODY CAN DENY THAT SOUTH AFRICA COULD BE WORSE THAN IT IS. ONE OF THE MOST WORRYING THINGS ABOUT SOUTH AFRICA IS THAT IT DOESN'T SEEM AS YET TO HAVE MADE ANY MAJOR ACCOMMODATION WITH THE INTERNATIONAL CONDEMNATION OF THEIR POLICIES. THERE WAS A TIME A FEW YEARS BACK WHEN IT SEEMED AS IF THEY WERE MOVING. MR. VORSTER'S GOVERNMENT ITSELF HAS AT TIMES LOOKED AS IF IT WAS GOING TO MOVE, BUT I MUST SAY THERE HAS BEEN

PRACTICALLY NO PROGRESS. JUST RECENTLY THERE WERE THESE PRESS LAWS WHICH - THANKFULLY THEY AREN'T COMING INTO BEING NOW - THEY HAVEN'T BEEN SUCCESSFUL, WE HAVE GOT TO FACE IT THAT THE WESTERN WORLD'S PRESSURE AND MORAL ARGUMENTS AND STRENGTH HAVE NOT PRODUCED MUCH AND SO THE BLACK AFRICANS AND PARTICULARLY AT THE UNITED NATIONS, ARE PUTTING ON EVER INCREASING PRESSURE ON US TO TAKE FURTHER ACTION. ALL I AM SAYING IS IF YOU GO TO THE EXTREME, FOR INSTANCE SOMETIMES ADVOCATED TOTAL AND COMPLETE ECONOMIC SANCTIONS AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA, OF COURSE THAT WOULD DAMAGE BRITISH INTERESTS. I DON'T DENY THAT. THAT'S NOT THE SOLE REASON WHY I WOULD AGAINST IT. I THINK I WOULD IN FACT GO AGAINST GETTING A CHANGE OF OPINION IN SOUTH AFRICA. AND THE BALL NOW IS VERY MUCH IN THE SOUTH AFRICANS' COURT. THEY HAVE GOT TO MAKE CHANGES FOR WORLD OPINION OTHERWISE THERE WILL BE
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MOUNTING PRESSURE WHICH WILL BE IRRESTIBLE AND I THINK THIS IS THE MAJOR CHALLENGE THAT SOUTH AFRICA FACES. NOW I THINK WHEN I SEE MR. VORSTER IN CAPE TOWN I WILL EXPLAIN THESE ISSUES. NOW HE IS A PRACTICAL POLITICIAN, HE MUST SEE WHICH WAY IT IS GOING AND I THINK IT IS IN HIS INTERESTS TO GET A RESOLUTION TO THE PROBLEMS OF RHODESIA, AND IN HIS INTERESTS TO GET A RESOLUTION OF THE PROBLEMS OF NAMIBIA THAT WILL BE SATISFACTORY AND ACCEPTABLE TO WORLD OPINION. IT IS ALSO STRONGLY IN HIS INTERESTS TO START MODERATING, CHANGING THE DEVELOPMENTS OF SOUTH AFRICA'S INTERNAL POLICIES SO THAT THEY ARE MORE ACCEPTABLE TO THE WORLD. NOW IF THEY DON'T SEE THAT, AND I MUST SAY THERE IS NOT MUCH EVIDENCE THAT THEY ARE SEEING IT, THEN THERE WILL BE AN INEVITABLE CLASH AND IT WILL BE VERY UGLY, AND IT'S NO GOOD THE SOUTH AFRICANS SAYING THAT THIS A FIGHT VERSUS COMMUNISM AND THEMSELVES. IT'S NOT THAT. THERE ARE ELEMENTS OF COMMUNISTS AND INFILTRATION OF COMMUNISTIC ELEMENTS IN AFRICA WHICH ARE VERY WORRYING. YOU CAN'T FIGHT THE PROBLEM OF RACIALISM BY PRETENDING ITS ALL COMMUNISTIC. AFTER ALL, DETESTATION OF APARTHEID THAT EXISTS ALL OVER THE WORLD IS HELD BY VERY STRONG DEMOCRATS, IT'S HELD BY PEOPLE OF LEFT AND

RIGHT OF THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM. THERE IS NO POLITICAL
DIVISION OF OPINION IN THIS COUNTRY REALLY ON DETESTATION
OF APARTHEID. END QUOTE.
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